

GPRA: Ensuring Performance Management

During the past several years, CDC has engaged in planning processes with its partners in state and local health departments, the Department of Health and Human Services, and internal staff to establish a long-term commitment to achieving public health outcomes. Those joint efforts have resulted in the creation of a performance plan that clearly describes CDC's intended performance, that includes strategies involved in achieving desired results, and that provides data to assess the success of those strategies. In FY 2002, CDC continued to revise and refine its performance plan and report. The plan and report continue to be organized consistent with CDC's new budget structure and describe CDC's programs in terms analogous with our identity themes.

CDC has now completed three full cycles of implementing the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Each cycle includes strategic planning, annual planning, and program assessment and reporting. During FY 2002, CDC worked to create a more robust performance management system that spans multiple years and provides trend data wherever possible. CDC continues to provide targets and baseline measures for all FY 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 performance measures and information on actual results for most of the performance measures contained in our multiyear plan.

As was the case in developing CDC's initial performance plan, CDC has continued to emphasize supporting the HHS strategic goals and the national health promotion and disease prevention objectives in *Healthy People 2000* and *Healthy People 2010*. Developing performance goals and targets for health promotion and disease prevention proves difficult because public health problems and their solutions are often determined externally by societal changes and environmental events instead of by planned internal actions. Consequently, CDC's goals and measures project a broad, overarching approach that targets the underlying causes of disease, disability, and injury. Those underlying factors have been termed the "actual causes of death," and their toll on our nation's health, in terms of health care costs and years of potential life lost, is significant.

Since its initial efforts in implementing GPRA, CDC has continued to work with its partners and HHS to update and integrate enhancements to its performance

plans and reports. CDC's success in developing a good performance plan is based on its use of and access to data and the ability to communicate the linkage between CDC's programs and the desired health outcomes.

CDC's reliance on data and access to data are exemplified by its approach to public health problems. To address those problems, CDC uses a reliable, proven, flexible four-step process that adapts to the wide variety of problems that are subjects of CDC programs: infectious diseases, bioterrorism, environmental and occupational health, birth defects and developmental disabilities, injuries, HIV, and chronic diseases. This public health approach consists of detecting and defining a problem through surveillance; determining the causes; developing and testing potential strategies for handling the problem; responding to urgent health crises; and implementing prevention programs. The approach is based solidly in science and is reflected in CDC's programs as well as its evaluation of programs.

As of December 31, 2002, CDC has achieved or exceeded targets set for 122 of the 178 performance measures in CDC's FY 2002 Performance Report. Measures with outstanding data will be reported as soon as results become available. We anticipate that we will have data available for 51 measures in 2003, and for four measures in 2004; data for one measure will not be available until 2005. At this point, CDC has achieved or exceeded 80% of its targets for which data are available.

Numbers, of course, tell only part of CDC's performance story. To improve our performance plan and report, we revised our plan so that each section now addresses the three CDC identity themes in greater detail:

- Protecting the health and safety of Americans.
- Providing credible information to enhance health decisions.
- Promoting health through strong partnerships.

For the latest detailed descriptions about CDC's programs, their intended results, and ongoing activities, see the publication *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's FY 2004 Performance Plan, FY 2003 Final Performance Plan, and FY 2002 Performance Report* (available spring 2003).